BARNABY RUDGE.

A NEW WORK BY BOZ.

CHAPTER LXIX.

It was the dead of night, and very dark, when Barnaby, with his stumbling companion, approached the place where he had left his father; but he could see him stealing away into the gloom, distrustful even of him, and rapidly retreating. After calling to him twice or thrice that there was nothing to fear, but without effect, he suffered Hugh to sink upon the ground, and followed, to bring him back.

He continued to creep away, until Barnaby was close upon him; then turned, and said in a terrible though suppressed voice:

"Let me go. Do not lay hands upon me. Stand back. You have told her; and you and she together, have betrayed me!"

Barnaby looked at him in silence.

"You have seen your mother!"

"No," cried Barnaby, eagerly. "Not for a long time—longer than I can tell. A whole year, I think. Is she here?"

His father looked upon him steadfastly for a few moments, then said—drawing nearer to him as he spoke, for, seeing his face, and hearing his words, it was impossible to doubt his truth:

"What man is that?"

"Hugh—Hugh. Only Hugh. You know him. *He* will not harm you. Why, you 're afraid of Hugh! Ha, ha, ha! Afraid of gruff, old, noisy Hugh!"

"What man is he, I ask you?" he rejoined so fiercely, that Barnaby stopped in his laugh, and shrinking back, surveyed him with a look of terrified amazement.

"Why, how stern you are! You make me fear you, though you are my father—I never feared her. Why do you speak to me so?"

—"I want," he answered, putting away the hand which his son, with a timid desire to propitiate him, laid upon his sleeve—"I want an answer, and you give me only jeers and questions. Who have you brought with you to this hiding-place, poor fool; and where is the blind man?"

"I don't know where. His house was close shut. I waited, but no person came; that was no fault of mine. This is Hugh—brave Hugh, who broke into that ugly jail, and set us free. Aha! You like him now, do you? You like him now!"

"Why does he lie upon the ground?"

"He has had a fall, and has been drinking. The fields and trees go round, and round, and round with him, and the ground heaves under his feet. You know him? You remember? See!"

They had by this time returned to where he lay, and both stooped over him to look into his face.

"I recollect the man," his father murmured. "Why did you bring him here?"

"Because he would have been killed if I had left him over yonder. They were firing guns, and shedding blood. Does the sight of blood turn you sick, father? I see it does, by your face. That's like me—What are you looking at?

"At nothing!" said the murderer softly, as he started back a pace or two, and gazed with sunken jaw and staring eyes above his son's head. "At nothing!"

He remained in the same attitude and with the some expression on his face for a minute or more; then glanced slowly round as if he had lost something; and went shivering back, toward the shed.

"Shall I bring him in, father?" asked Barnaby, who had looked on, wondering.

He only answered with a suppressed groan, and lying upon the ground, wrapped his cloak about his head, and shrunk into the darkest corner.

Finding that nothing would rouse Hugh now, or make him sensible for a moment, Barnaby dragged him along the grass, and laid him on a little heap of refuse hay and straw which had been his own bed; first having brought some water from a running stream hard by, and washed his wound, and laved his hands and face. Then he lay down himself, between the two, to pass the night; and looking at the stars, fell fast a-sleep.

Awakened early in the morning, by the sunshine, and the songs of birds, and hum of insects, he left them sleeping in the hut, and walked into the sweet and pleasant air. But he felt that on his jaded senses, oppressed and burdened with the dreadful scenes of last night, and many nights before, all the beauties of opening day, which he had so often tasted, and in which he had had so much deep delight, fell heavily. He thought of the blithe mornings when he and the dogs went bounding on together through the woods and fields; and the recollection filled his eyes with tears. He had no consciousness, God help him, of having done wrong, nor had he any new perception of the merits of the cause in which he had been engaged, or those of the men who had advocated it; but he was full of cares now, and regrets, and dismal recollections, and wishes (quite unknown to him before) that this or that event had never happened, and that the sorrow and suffering of so many people had been spared. And now he began to think how happy they would be—his father, mother, he, and Hugh if they rambled away together, and lived in some lonely place, where there were none of these troubles; and that perhaps the blind man, who had talked so wisely about gold, and told him of the great secrets he knew, could teach them how to live without being pinched and griped by want. As this occurred to him, he was the more sorry that he had not seen him last night; and he was still brooding over this regret, when his father came, and touched him on the shoulder.

"Ah!" cried Barnaby, starting from his fit of thoughtfulness. "Is it only you?"

"Who should it be?"

"I almost thought," he answered, "it was the blind man. I must have some talk with him, father."

"And so must I, for without seeing him, I don't know where to fly or what to do; and lingering here, is death. You must go to him again, and bring him here."

"Must I!" cried Barnaby, delighted; "that's brave, father. That's what I want to do."

"But you must bring only him and none other. And though you wait at his door a whole day and night, still you must wait, and not come back without him."

"Don't you fear that," he cried gaily. "He shall come, he shall come."

"Trim off these gewgaws," said his father, plucking the scraps of ribbon and the feathers from his hat, "and over your own dress, wear my cloak. Take heed how you go, and they will be too busy in the streets to notice you. Of your coming back you need take no account, for he'll manage that, safely."

"To be sure!" said Barnaby. "To be sure he will! A wise man, father, and one who can teach us to be rich! Oh! I know him, I know him."

He was speedily dressed; and, as well disguised as he could be, with a lighter heart he then set off upon his second journey; leaving Hugh, who was still in a drunken stupor, stretched upon the ground within the shed, and his father walking to and fro before it.

The murderer, full of anxious thoughts, looked after him, and paced up and down, disquieted by every breath of air that whispered among the boughs, and by every light shadow thrown by the passing clouds upon the daisied ground. He was anxious about his safe return, and yet, though his own life and safety hung upon it, felt a relief while he was gone. In the intense selfishness which the constant presence before him of his great crimes, and their consequences here and hereafter, engendered, every thought of Barnaby, as his son, was swallowed up and lost. Still, his presence was a torture and reproach; in his wild eyes there were terrible images of that guilty night; with his unearthly aspect, and his half-formed mind, he seemed to the murderer a creature who had sprung into existence from his victim's blood. He could not bear his look, his voice, his touch; and yet was forced, by his own desperate condition and his only hope of cheating the gibbet, to have him by his side, and to know that he was inseparable from his single chance of escape.

He walked to and fro, with little rest, all day, revolving these things in his mind; and still Hugh lay, unconscious, in the shed. At length, when the sun was setting, Barnaby returned, leading the blind man, and talking earnestly to him as they came along together.

The murderer advanced to meet them, and bidding his son go on and speak to Hugh, who had just then staggered to his feet, took his place at the blind man's elbow, and slowly followed, toward the shed.

"Why did you send *him?*" said Stagg.—"Don't you know it was the way to have him lost as soon as found?"

"Would you have had me come myself?" returned the other.

"Humph! Perhaps not. I was before the jail on Tuesday night, but missed you in the crowd. I was out last night, too. There was good work last night—gay work—profitable work"—he added, rattling the money in his pockets.

"Have you—"

—"Seen your good lady? Yes."

"Do you mean to tell me more, or not?"

"I'll tell you all," returned the blind man, with a laugh. "Excuse me—but I love to see you so impatient. There's energy in it."

"Does she consent to say the word that may save me?"

"No," returned the blind man emphatically, as he turned his face toward him. "No. Thus it is. She has been at death's door since she lost her darling—has been insensible, and I know not what. I tracked her to a hospital, and presented myself (with your leave) at her bed-side. Our talk was not a long one, for she was weak, and there being people near, I was not quite easy. But I told her all that you and I agreed upon; and pointed out the young gentleman's position, in strong terms. She tried to soften me, but that, of course (as I told her) was lost time. She cried and moaned, you may be sure; all women do.—Then, of a sudden, she found her voice and strength, and said that Heaven would help her and her innocent son; and that to Heaven she appealed against us—which she did; in really very pretty language, I assure you. I advised her, as a friend, not to count too much upon assistance from any such distant quarter—recommended her to think of it—told her where I lived—said I knew she would send to me before noon the next day—and left her either in a faint or shamming."

When he had concluded this narration, during which he had made several pauses, for the convenience of cracking and eating nuts, of which he seemed to have a pocketfull, the blind man pulled a flask from his pocket, took a draught himself, and offered it to his companion.

"You won't, won't you?" he said, feeling that he pushed it from him. "Well! Then the gallant gentleman who's lodging with you, will. Hallo, bully!"

"Death!" said the other, holding him back. "Will you tell me what I am to do?"

"Do! Nothing easier. Make a moonlight flitting in two hours' time with the young gentleman (he's quite ready to go; I have been giving him good advice as we came along), and get as far from London as you can. Let me know where you are, and leave the rest to me. She *must* come round; she can't hold out long; and as to the chances of your being retaken in the meanwhile, why it wasn't one man who got out of Newgate, but three hundred. Think of that, for your comfort."

"We must support life.—How?"

"How!" repeated the blind man. "By eating and drinking. And how get meat and drink, but by paying for it? Money!" he cried, slapping his pocket. "Is money the word? Why, the streets have been running money. Devil send that the sport's not over yet, for these are jolly times; golden, rare, roaring, scrambling times. Hallo, bully! Hallo! Ha lo! Drink, bully, drink. Where are ye there? Hallo!"

With such vociferations, and with a boisterous manner which bespoke his perfect abandonment to the general licence and disorder, he groped his way toward the shed, where Hugh and Barnaby were sitting on the ground, and entered.

"Put it about!" he cried, handing his flask to Hugh. "The kennels run with wine and gold. Guineas and strong water flow from the very pumps. About with it, don't spare it!"

Exhausted, unwashed, unshorn; begrimed with smoke and dust; his hair clotted with blood; his voice quite gone, so that he spoke in whispers; his skin parched up by fever; his whole body bruised and cut, and beaten about; Hugh still took the flask, and raised it to his lips. He was in the act of drinking, when the front of the shed was suddenly darkened, and Dennis stood before them.

"No offence, no offence," said that personage in a conciliatory tone, as Hugh stopped in his draught, and eyed him, with no pleasant look, from head to foot. "No offence, brother. Barnaby here too, eh? How are you, Barnaby? And two other gentlemen! Your humble servant, gentlemen. No offence to *you* either, I hope. Eh, brothers?"

Notwithstanding that he spoke in this very friendly and confident manner, he seemed to have considerable hesitation about entering, and remained outside the roof. He was rather better dressed than usual: wearing the same suit of thread-bare black, it is true, but having round his neck an unwholesome-looking cravat of a yellowish white; and on his hands great leather gloves, such as a gardener might wear in following his trade. His shoes were newly greased, and ornamented with a pair of rusty iron buckles; the pack-thread at his knees had been renewed; and where he wanted buttons, he wore pins. Altogether, he had something the look of a tipstaff or a bailiff's follower, desperately faded, but who had a notion of keeping up the appearance of a professional character, and making the best of the worst means.

"You're very snug here," said Mr. Dennis, pulling out a mouldy pocket hankerchief, which looked like a decomposed halter; and wiping his forehead in a nervous manner.

"Not snug enough to prevent your finding us, it seems," Hugh answered, sulkily.

"Why, I'll tell you what, brother," said Dennis, with a friendly smile, "when you don't want me to know which way you're riding, you must wear another sort of bells on your horses. Ah! I know the sound o' them you wore last night, and have got quick ears for 'em, that's the truth. Well, but how are you, brother?"

He had by this time approached, and now ventured to sit down by him.

"How am I?" answered Hugh. "Where were you yesterday? Where did you go when you left me in the jail? Why did you leave me? And what did you mean by rolling your eyes and shaking your fist at me, eh?"

"I shake my fist!—at you, brother!" said Dennis, gently checking Hugh's uplifted hand, which looked threatening.

"Your stick, then; it's all one."

"Lord love you, brother, I meant nothing. You don't understand me by half. I shouldn't wonder now," he added, in the tone of a desponding and an injured man, "but you thought, because I wanted them chaps left in the prison, that I was a going to desert the banners?"

Hugh told him, with an oath, that he did.

"Well!" said Mr. Dennis, mournfully, "if you an't enough to make a man mistrust his feller-creeturs, I don't know what is. Desert the banners, eh! Me! Ned Dennis, as was so christened by his own father!—Is this axe your 'n, brother?"

"Yes, that's mine," said Hugh, in the same sullen manner as before; "it might have hurt you if you had come in its way once or twice last night. Put it down."

"Might have hurt me!" said Mr. Dennis, still keeping it in his hand, and feeling the edge with an air of abstraction. "Might have hurt me! and me exerting myself all the time to the wery best advantage. Here's a world! And you 're not a going to ask me to take a sup out of that 'ere bottle, eh?"

Hugh tossed it towards him. As he raised it to his lips, Barnaby jumped up, and motioning them to be silent, looked eagerly out.

"What's the matter, Barnaby?" said Dennis, glancing at Hugh and dropping the flask, but still holding the axe in his hand.

"Hush!" he answered softly. "What do I see glittering behind the hedge?"

"What!" cried the hangman, raising his voice to its highest pitch, and laying hold of him and Hugh. "Not—not SOLDIERS, surely!"

That moment the shed was filled with armed men, and a body of horse, galloping into the field, drew up before it.

"There!" said Dennis, who remained untouched among them when they had seized their prisoners, "it's them two young ones, gentlemen, that the proclamation puts a price on. This other 's an escaped felon. I'm sorry for it, brother," he added, in a tone of resignation, addressing himself to Hugh; "but you've brought it on yourself; you forced me to do it; you wouldn't respect the soundest constitootional principles, you know; you went and wiolated the wery frame-work of society. I would sooner have given away a trifle in charity than done this; I would, upon my soul. If you'll keep fast hold on 'em, gentlemen, I think I can make a shift to tie 'em better than you can."

But this operation was postponed for a few moments by a new occurrence. The blind man, whose ears were quicker than most people's sight, had been alarmed, before Barnaby, by a rustling in the bushes, under cover of which the soldiers had advanced. He retreated instantly—had hidden somewhere for a minute—and probably in his confusion mistaking the point at which he had emerged, was now seen running across the open meadow.

An officer cried directly that he had helped to plunder a house last night. He was loudly called on to surrender. He ran the harder, and in a few seconds would have been out of gun-shot. The word was given and the men fired.

There was a breathless pause and a profound silence, during which all eyes were upon him. He had been seen to start at the discharge as if the report had frightened him. But he neither stopped nor slackened his pace in the least, and ran on full forty yards farther. Then, without one reel or stagger, or sign of faintness, or quivering of any limb, he dropped.

Some of them hurried up to where he lay; the hangman with them. Everything had passed so quickly that the smoke was not yet scattered, but curled slowly off in a little cloud, which seemed like the dead man's spirit moving solemnly away. There were a few drops of blood upon the grass—more when they turned him over—that was all.

"Look here! look here!" said the hangman, stooping one knee beside the body, and gazing up with a disconsolate face at the officer and men. "Here 's a pretty sight!"

"Stand out of the way," replied the officer. "Sergeant! see what he had about him."

The man turned his pockets out upon the grass, and counted, besides some foreign coins and two rings, five-and-forty guineas in gold. These were bundled up in a handkerchief and carried away! the body remained there for the present, but six men and the sergeant were left to take it to the nearest public-house.

"Now then, if you 're going," said the sergeant, clapping Dennis on the back, and pointing after the officer who was walking towards the shed.

To which Mr. Dennis only replied, "Don't talk to me!" and then repeated what he had said before, namely, "Here 's a pretty sight!"

"It 's not one that you care for much, I should think," observed the sergeant, coolly.

"Why, who," said Mr. Dennis, rising, "should care for it, if I don't?"

"Oh! I didn't know you were so tender-hearted," said the sergeant. "That's all."

"Tender-hearted!" echoed Dennis. "Tender-hearted! Look at this man. Do you call *this* constitootional? Do you see him shot through and through, instead of being worked off like a Briton? Damme, if I know which party to side with. You're as bad as the other. What's to become of the country if the military power 's to go a superseding the ciwilians in this way? Where's this poor fellow-creetur's rights as a citizen, that he didn't have *me* in his last moments! I was here. I was willing. I was ready. These are nice times, brother, to have the dead crying out against us in this way, and sleep comfortably in our beds arterwards; wery nice!"

Whether he derived any material consolation from binding the prisoners, is uncertain; most probably he did. At all events his being summoned to that work, diverted him, for the time, from those painful reflections, and gave his thoughts a more congenial occupation.

They were not all three carried off together, but in two parties; Barnaby and his father going by one road in the centre of a body of foot; and Hugh, fast bound upon a horse, and guarded by a troop of cavalry, being taken by another.

They had no opportunity for the least communication, in the short interval which preceded their departure; being kept strictly apart. Hugh only observed that Barnaby walked with a drooping head among his guard, and, without raising his eyes, that he tried to waive his fettered hand when he passed. For himself, he buoyed up his courage as he rode along, with the assurance that the mob would force his jail, wherever it might be, and set him at liberty. But when they got into London, and more especially into Fleet Market, lately the stronghold of the rioters, where the military were rooting out the last remnant of the crowd, he saw that this hope was gone, and felt that he was riding to his death.

CHAPTER LXX.

Mr. Dennis having despatched this piece of business without any personal hurt or inconvenience, and having retired into the tranquil respectability of private life, resolved to solace himself with half an hour or so of female society. With this amiable purpose in his mind, he bent his steps toward the house where Dolly and Miss Haredale were still confined, and whither Miss Miggs had also been removed by order of Mr. Simon Tappertit.

As he walked along the streets with his leather gloves clasped behind him, and his face indicative of cheerful thought and pleasant calculation, Mr. Dennis might have been likened unto a farmer ruminating among his crops, and enjoying by anticipation the bountiful gifts of Providence. Look where he would, some heap of ruins afforded him rich promise of a working off; the whole town appeared to have been ploughed and sown, and nurtured by most genial weather; and a good harvest was at hand.

Having taken up arms and resorted to deeds of violence, with the great main object of preserving the Old Bailey in all its purity, and the gallows in all its pristine usefulness and moral grandeur, it would be going too far to assert that Mr. Dennis had ever distinctly contemplated and foreseen this happy state of things. He rather looked upon it as one of those most beautiful dispensations which are inscrutably brought about for the behoof and advantage of good men. He felt, as it were, personally referred to, in this prosperous ripening for the gibbet; and had never considered himself so much the pet and favorite child of Destiny, or loved that lady so well or with such a calm and virtuous reliance, in all his life.

As to being taken up himself, as a rioter, and punished with the rest, Mr. Dennis dismissed that possibility from his thoughts as an idle chimera; arguing that the line of conduct he had adopted at Newgate, and the service he had rendered that day, would be more than a set-off against any evidence which might identify him as a member of the crowd; that any charge of companionship that might be made against him by those who were themselves in danger, would certainly go for nought; and that if any trivial indiscretion on his part should unluckily come out, the uncommon usefulness of his office at present, and the great demand for the exercise of its functions, would certainly cause it to be winked at, and passed over. In a word, he had played his cards throughout, with great care; had changed sides at the very nick of time; had delivered up two of the most notorious rioters, and a distinguished felon to boot; and was quite at his ease.

Saving—for there is a reservation; and even Mr. Dennis was not perfectly happy—saving for one circumstance; to wit, the forcible detention of Dolly and Miss Haredale, in a house almost adjoining his own. This was a stumbling-block, for if they were discovered and released, they could, by the testimony they had it in their power to give, place him in a situation of great jeopardy; and to set them at liberty, first extorting from them an oath of secrecy and silence, was a thing not to be thought of. It was more, perhaps, with an eye to the danger which lurked in this quarter, than from his abstract love of conversation with the sex, that the hangman, quickening his steps, now hastened into their society; cursing the amorous natures of Hugh and Mr. Tappertit with great heartiness, at every step he took.

When he entered the miserable room in which they were confined, Dolly and Miss Haredale withdrew in silence to the farthest corner. But Miss Miggs, who was particularly tender of her reputation, immediately fell upon her knees and began to scream very loud, crying, "What will become of me!"—"Where is my Simmuns!" "Have mercy good gentlemen on my sex's weakness!"—with other doleful lamentations of that nature, which she delivered with great propriety and decorum.

"Miss, Miss," whispered Dennis beckoning to her with his forefinger, "come here—I won't hurt you. Come here, my lamb, will you?"

On hearing this tender epithet, Miss Miggs, who had left off screaming directly he had opened his lips, and had listened to him attentively, began again, crying "Oh I'm his lamb! He says I'm his lamb! Oh gracious, why wasn't I born old and ugly! Why was I ever made to be the youngest of six, and all of 'em dead and in their blessed graves, excepting one married sister, which is settled in Golden Lion Court, number twenty-sivin, second bell-handle on the—!"

"Don't I say I an't going to hurt you?" said Dennis, pointing to a chair. "Why, Miss, what's the matter?"

"I don't know what mayn't be the matter!" cried Miss Miggs, clasping her hands distractedly. "Any thing may be the matter!"

"But nothing is, I tell you," said the hangman. "First stop that noise and come and sit down here, will you, chuckey?"

The coaxing tone in which he said these latter words might have failed in its object, if he had not accompanied them with sundry sharp jerks of his thumb over one shoulder, and with divers winks and thrustings of his tongue into his cheek, from which signals the damsel gathered that he sought to speak to her apart, concerning Miss Haredale and Dolly. Her curiosity being very powerful, and her jealousy by no means inactive, she arose, and with a great deal of shivering and starting back, and much muscular action among all the small bones in her throat, gradually approached him.

"Sit down," said the hangman.

Suiting the action to the word, he thrust her rather suddenly and prematurely into a chair; and designing to re-assure her by a little harmless jocularity, such as is adapted to please and fascinate the sex, converted his right forefinger into an ideal bradawl or gimlet, and made as though he would screw the same into her side—whereat Miss Miggs shrieked again, and discovered symptoms of faintness.

"Lovey, my dear," whispered Dennis, drawing his chair close to hers. "When was your young man here last, eh?"

"*My* young man, good gentleman!" answered Miggs in a tone of exquisite distress.

"Ah! Simmuns, you know—him!" said Dennis.

"Mine indeed!" cried Miggs, with a burst of bitterness—and as she said it, she glanced toward Dolly. "*Mine*, good gentleman!"

This was just what Mr. Dennis wanted, and expected.

"Ah!" he said, looking so soothingly not to say amorously on Miggs, that she sat, as she afterward remarked, on pins and needless of the sharpest Whitechapel kind; not knowing what intentions might be suggesting that expression to his features; "I was afraid of that. *I* saw as much, myself. It's her fault. She *will* entice 'em."

"I wouldn't" cried Miggs, folding her hands and looking upwards with a kind of devout blankness, "I wouldn't lay myself out as she does; I wouldn't be as bold as her; I wouldn't seem to say to all male creeturs 'come and kiss me'"—and here a shudder quite convulsed her frame—"for any earthly crowns as might be offered. Worlds," Miggs added solemnly, "should not seduce me. No. Not if I was Wenis."

"Well but you are Wenus, you know," said Mr. Dennis, confidentially.

"No, I am not, good gentleman," answered Miggs, shaking her head with an air of self-denial which seemed to imply that she might be if she chose, but she hoped she knew better. "No I am not, good gentleman. Don't charge me with it."

Up to this time, she had turned round every now and then to where Dolly and Miss Haredale had retired, and uttered a scream, or groan, or laid her hand upon her heart and trembled excessively, with a view of keeping up appearances, and giving them to understand that she conversed with the visitor, under protest and on compulsion, and at a great personal sacrifice, for their common good. But at this point, Mr. Dennis looked so very full of meaning, and gave such a singularly expressively twitch to his face as a request to her to come still nearer to him, that she abandoned these little arts and gave him her whole and undivided attention.

"When was Simmuns here, I say?" quoth Dennis, in her ear.

"Not since yesterday morning; and then only for a few minutes. Not all day the day before."

"You know he meant all along to carry off that one!" said Dennis, indicating Dolly by the slightest possible jerk of his head:—"And to hand you over to somebody else."

Miss Miggs, who had fallen into a terrible state of grief when the first part of this sentence was spoken, recovered a little at the second, and seemed, by the sudden check she put upon her tears, to intimate that possibly this arrangement might meet her views; and that it might, perhaps, remain an open question.

"—But unfortunately," pursued Dennis, who observed this; somebody else was fond of her too, you see; and even if he wasn't, somebody else is took for a rioter, and it's all over with him."

Miss Miggs relapsed.

"Now I want," said Dennis, "to clear this house, and to see you righted. What if I was to get her off, out of the way, eh?"

Miss Miggs, brightening again, rejoined, with many breaks and pauses from excess of feeling, that temptations had been Simmuns's bane. That it was not his faults, but hers, (meaning Dolly's.) That men did not see through these dreadful arts as women did, and therefore was caged and trapped, as Simmun had been. That she had no personal motives to serve—far from it; on the contrary, her intentions was good towards all parties. But forasmuch as she knowed that Simmun, if united to any artful and designing minxes (she would name no names, for that was not her dispositions)—to *any* designing and artful minxes—must be made miserable and unhappy for life, she *did* incline towards prewentions. Such, she added, was her free confessions. But as this was private feelings, and might perhaps be looked upon as wengeance, she begged the gentleman would say no more. Whatever he said, wishing to do her duty by all mankind, even by them as had ever been her bitterest enemies, she would not lisien to him.—With that she stopped her ears, and shook her head from side to side, to intimate to Mr. Dennis that, though he talked until he had no breath left, she was as deaf as any adder.

"Lookee here, my sugar-stick," said Mr. Dennis, "if your view 's the same as mine, and you'll only be quiet and slip away at the right time, I can have the house clear to-morrow, and be out of this trouble.—Stop though! there's the other."

"Which other, sir?" asked Miggs—still with her fingers in her ears and her head shaking obstinately.

"Why, the tallest one, yonder," said Dennis, as he stroked his chin, and added, in an under tone to himself, something about not crossing Muster Gashford.

Miss Miggs replied (still being profoundly deaf) that if Miss Haredale stood in the way at all, he might make himself quite easy on that score—as she had gathered, from what passed between Hugh and Mr. Tappertit when they were last there, that she was to be removed alone (not by them, by somebody else) to-morrow night.

Mr. Dennis opened his eyes very wide at this piece of information, whistled once, considered once, and finally slapped his head once and nodded once, as if he had got the clue to this mysterious removal, and so dismissed it. Then he imparted his design concerning Dolly to Miss Miggs, who was taken more deaf than before, when he began; and so remained, all through.

The notable scheme was this. Mr. Dennis was immediately to seek out from among the rioters, some daring young fellow (and he had one in his eye, he said,) who, terrified by the threats he could hold out to him, and alarmed by the capture of so many who were no better and no worse than he, would gladly avail himself of any help to get abroad, and out of harm's way, with his plunder, even though his journey were incumbered by an unwilling companion; indeed, the unwilling companion being a beautiful girl, would probably be an additional inducement and temptation. Such a person found, he proposed to bring him there on the ensuing night, when the tall one was taken off, and Miss Miggs had purposely retired; and then that Dolly should be gagged, muffled in a cloak, and carried in any handy conveyance down to the river's side; where there were abundant means of getting her smuggled snugly off in any small craft of doubtful character, and no questions asked. With regard to the expense of this removal, he would say, at a rough calculation, that two or three silver tea or coffee pots, with something additional for drink (such as a muffineer, or toast-rack,) would more than cover it. Articles of plate of every kind having been buried by the rioters in several lonely parts of London, and particularly, as he knew, in St. James's Square, which, though easy of access, was little frequented after dark, and had a convenient piece of water in the midst, the needful funds were close at hand, and could be had upon the shortest notice. With regard to Dolly, the gentleman would exercise his own discretion. He would be bound to do nothing but take her away, and keep her away; all other arrangements and dispositions would rest entirely with himself.

If Miss Miggs had had her hearing, no doubt she would have been greatly shocked by the indelicacy of a young female's going away with a stranger, by night (for her moral feelings, as we have said, were of the tenderest kind;) but directly Mr. Dennis ceased to speak, she reminded him that he had only wasted breath. She then went on to say (still with her fingers in her ears) that nothing less than a severe practical lesson would save the locksmith's daughter from utter ruin; and that she felt it, as it were, a moral obligation and a sacred duty to the family, to wish that some one would devise one for her reformation. Miss Miggs remarked, and very justly, as an abstract sentiment which happened to occur to her at the moment, that she dared to say the locksmith and his wife would murmur, and repine, if they were ever, by forcible abduction, or otherwise, to lose their child; but that we seldom knew, in this world, what was best for us; such being our sinful and imperfect natures, that very few arrived at that clear understanding.

Having brought their conversation to this satisfactory end, they parted: Dennis, to further his design, and take another walk about his farm; Miss Miggs, to launch, when he left her, into such a burst of mental anguish (which she gave them to understand was occasioned by certain tender things he had had the presumption and audacity to say,) that little Dolly's heart was quite melted. Indeed, she said and did so much to soothe the outraged feelings of Miss Miggs, and looked so beautiful while doing so, that if that young maid had not had ample vent for her surpassing spite, in a knowledge of the mischief that was brewing, she must have scratched her features, on the spot.